



GOD'S WILLING HANDS



January 5

When Communism fell in the former Soviet Union, thousands flocked to evangelistic meetings to hear messages of hope in Jesus that they had been denied for generations. But in time interest in religion waned as people turned to wealth, fame, and materialism in search of happiness. Today evangelism is as difficult in Russia as in much of Western Europe, but church members continue to share their faith in different ways. In Krasnodar [KRAS-no-dar], a city near the Black Sea in southwestern Russia, members use literature to call people's attention to God's message. But they don't stop there.

The Plan

Pastors invite church members to write the names of people for whom they are praying in a prayer book at church. Every week these people are prayed for by name, and each week members receive specially developed tracts to share with those people for whom they are praying and working. Each tract contains a short hope-filled devotional on one aspect of faith.

On the fourth Sabbath of the month, everyone can have a part by sharing

copies of the church's missionary newspaper with friends and colleagues.

Some members give the newspapers out at work or in their apartment complexes. Children and youth give out newspapers on the streets or in shops. And when they find someone who is interested in reading more about the church, the members offer to bring them one of the tracts and invite them to sign up for Bible lessons.

Often while giving out literature, church members find people with special needs. They take their address and put them in touch with someone who can help meet their needs for food or medical care or clothing or just a friend to talk to. "We want to be the hands of God," one woman said. "Whatever needs God shows us, we want meet the need in His name."

And they are, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Goat Thief

One member owns a goat farm. One day she noticed that her goats were disappearing. She discovered a man carrying one of her goats away from its pen and stopped him. The man said that his family was hungry, and if he sold the goat, he could buy bread for them.

The woman asked the man to put the goat back into its pen while she prepared food for his family. She tucked in some missionary tracts as well. The man's family read the tracts and wanted to know more. The man stopped stealing goats and now works as a goat herder for the Adventist woman. And his family attends the Adventist church.

Priest and Pastor Share the Pulpit

Another family lives near an Orthodox priest. They visited the priest's family and shared literature with them. Sometimes the families discussed biblical topics together. The literature aroused an interest in Adventist teachings, and the priest invited his neighbors to worship in his home.

The Adventists introduced the priest to their pastor, and in time the priest's family visited the Adventist church and began keeping the Sabbath.

The pastor invited the priest to join him in holding evangelistic meetings in a town that had neither an Orthodox church nor an Adventist church. The priest agreed, and the two men visited every home in the town and invited people to join them in a celebration marking the 130th anniversary of the translation of the Bible.

During the program the priest declared that Adventists are truthful Christians and called the people to study the Bible

with them. Today small group meetings are being held in this town. And the Orthodox priest and his family help distribute the Adventist tracts and newspapers in their area.

The Magician

Three siblings were looking for an apartment to rent. They prayed that God would lead them to one. One day Alla, one of the sisters, met an old woman who offered to rent them an apartment. "Please come now and look at it," she insisted.

In time interest in religion waned as people turned to wealth, fame, and materialism in search of happiness.

After the three moved into the apartment, they discovered that their landlady was a magician who spoke to the spirits. The three young people prayed for the woman, but they were afraid to speak to her about her alliance with the devil. Instead they left some Bible tracts on the table where she would find them. The woman picked up the brightly colored tracts and read them. One of the tracts dealt with the devil's skillful lies. While reading it, the landlady read the truth about the magic that she practiced.

Later when a friend asked the landlady to tell her fortune, the landlady refused and suggested that her friend read the tract on the devil's lies. The landlady has asked the young people for more tracts and books about God.

The members in Krasnodar have shared more than 200,000 pieces of literature with friends and colleagues. Our mission offerings help these people and millions of others to be God's hands to those in need. Thank you for joining hands with others to support mission in Russia and throughout the world. 🌍

FAST FACTS

- Krasnodar lies near the Black Sea, it is a popular resort area for people living throughout Europe and Siberia to relax and regain their health.
- The churches in this region have caught the vision to reach these visitors for Christ.